

Topsham Public Library
Board of Trustees Business Meeting
Wednesday, October 18, 2017
Minutes

- 1) **Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order by Larry Fitch, President, at 7:00PM.
Present: Jerry Davis, Jim Demosthenes, Jen Ecker, Anne Eustis, Anne Macri, Irene Martin, Hahna Patterson, Larissa Vigue Picard, Megan Therriault, Joe Trafton, Sally Von Benken, Director Susan Preece. Absent: Diane Hender.
- 2) **Consent Agenda.** The Board reviewed the Consent Agenda, which included the Minutes of the September 13, 2017 Business Meeting, Development Committee Report, Finance Committee Report, and Friends Report. Anne Eustis made a motion to accept the Consent Agenda, Jen Ecker seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.
- 3) **David Douglass—Public Comment.** The Douglass residence borders the TPL parking lot. The white pine “screen” between the lot and his backyard has thinned considerably to the point where people at night in the parking lot can easily see into his backyard and home. Dave is planning to submit a request to town tree committee to come up with a plan to recreate the screen and wanted to get the support of the library before proceeding. The board was supportive of his concerns and agreed to work with him, via the TPL Facilities Committee, and the town to come up with a solution. During discussion several possible solutions were suggested: pull up the pines and plant something else, plant yew trees in between the white pines, put up a fence, etc. A tangential concern is where the town pushes the snow during the winter and potential damage to trees and/or fencing.
- 4) **Director’s Report.** Susan noted the following items.
 - She asked if everyone liked the new pie chart in the Finance report materials. Most agreed having a visual representation of the library’s budget was helpful.
 - In addition to Dave Douglass’s concerns, others have mentioned landscape issues around TPL lately, including invasive bittersweet vines that need to be removed.
 - TPL recently received \$500 from WalMart because of genealogy volunteer Karen Richards, who works there.
 - Interviews are scheduled for the Development Coordinator position on November 2.
 - The meeting time and day for the monthly Governance Committee meeting needs to be changed to suit all schedules.
 - It was recently discovered that all of the OverDrive and Cloud Library statistics have been incorrect in Susan’s reports since March (since the transition to Cloud Library). The head of Maine InfoNet noted an error in the way they’ve been calculated. Susan will provide corrected statistics at the next board meeting. It was asked if Cloud Library has comparable titles to OverDrive; Susan said it was comparable for the most part.

5) **Old Business:**

- a) **Annual Report.** The report has been submitted to the Cryer; it will appear in the November edition.
- b) **Annual Appeal.** Susan passed around some letters for board members to write notes on encouraging people to become Whitten Society members. The appeal goes out the week of November 13. Susan would like to see at least 3% increase over last year.

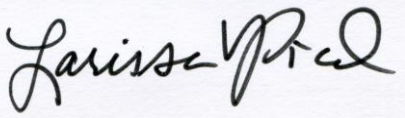
6) **New Business:**

- a) **Project Outcome Surveys—Summer Reading.** The surveys are the outgrowth of the board's desire to analyze how well the library is serving the community. The decision was to start with the Summer Reading programs for children, teens, and adults. So as not to reinvent the wheel, TPL chose to use the Public Library Association (PLA) and Gates Foundation "Project Outcome." Using this national/international tool (Canadian libraries are included) also offers the benefit of seeing where TPL stands in relation to other libraries. Susan noted that the Gates Foundation looks at libraries as educational institutions primarily, so its goal is to prove that libraries are helping educate the populace. (The other, more traditional, way to look at libraries is as a public good.) Susan feels that one of the challenges with the survey tool is the way some questions are posed. For example, the adult survey revealed only 50% "enjoy reading more," but in the comments section, some people say they literally can't fit more reading in their lives. Project Outcome also lumps together children and teens, while most public libraries treat them as separate groups. Susan noted that TPL's summer reading program for kids this year resulted in 650 bookmarks given out, 1,600 tickets received, 300 making it halfway through the program, 176 kids finishing, and 7,621 total hours read. Libraries using Project Outcome are allowed to add a couple custom questions. TPL added one additional question for each group. For Adults: "Would you take part in the program again?" Teens: "Do you think it's an important part of teen services?" Kids: "Did you have fun?" Susan was asked to what extent the Summer Reading Program for adults in particular preaches to the choir. She generally agreed and said the response rate of 17 surveys completed was not statistically significant. It was suggested that in the future perhaps there could be an incentive for completing the survey.
- b) **Interior Painting Update—request to amend contract to include upfront payment of \$10,000.** Anne made a motion to amend the contract as noted, Jerry seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.
- c) **Sarah Whitten Community Award.** Susan and Joe said the Development Committee had discussed several options for this year's award and had mostly settled on giving it to the Friends group. The board raised two major concerns: 1) Many people would perceive this as the library giving the award to itself, since some people don't understand that the Friends is a separate entity, and 2) It's not as compelling to give the award to a group as it is to an individual. After further discussion, the board decided on giving the award to Don Sanders, the bus driver who, in partnership with TPL, specifically Mariah, created

the bus book program that has received so much publicity. All were enthusiastic about this choice.

- 7) **Next meeting dates:** Nov. 15, Dec. 20, Jan. 17.
- 8) **Upcoming Events.** Find, Meet, Plan Your Topsham—Oct. 19-23. Larry explained that this four-day event is an effort to engage town residents in the comprehensive planning work. It will take place at the Old Firebarn off of Green Street. It begins Thursday evening with a bean supper at 5PM, and a kick-off overview at 6PM. On Friday, there are several group roundtables, a 6PM lantern walk of the historic district, and a 7PM outdoor showing of the Wonder Woman movie. On Saturday, there is a community party from 10AM-4PM including TPL's "pop-up" library and live music in the afternoon. On Saturday night, there will be an interim report provided, and on Sunday from 12-5PM, a community market will take place including farmer's market vendors and community organizations. This is the beginning of a year-and-half process. The new comprehensive plan goes before the town at the May 2019 town meeting.
- 9) **Adjournment** at 8:04PM. Jen made a motion to adjourn the meeting, Anne seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Larissa Vigue Picard". The signature is written in a cursive style and is placed on a light blue rectangular background.

Larissa Vigue Picard
Secretary